STRATEGIC HAZARD INTERVENTION ESPIONAGE LOGISTICS DIREC

To: Anthony Stark, Director of S.H.I.E.L.D.
From: [redacted]
Re: The Defenders

Director Stark,

The following is a brief assessment of the New Jersey State Initiative trial run team, *The Defenders*, by [redacted] on behalf of S.H.I.E.L.D.'s [redacted] division.

Kyle Richmond (codename: Nighthawk) doesn't strike me as a natural leader, Mr. Stark. Leading the Gargoyle against the Brothers Grimm is one thing, but watch the attached video: a squad of seasoned pros goes on a simple S.H.I.E.L.D. agent rescue mission against the Sons of the Serpent and a giant beast, the Quetzalcoatl, and botches it. These guys have fought Nazis, monsters, aliens and worse – this should have been a wash. And the team itself – She-Hulk and Colossus have similar destructive powers and the same disregard for everything the Initiative stands for. And as for the Blazing Skull – well...by all accounts, he's insane. Richmond might've been distracted during this mission...Agent Joaquin Pennysworth, the agent they'd been sent to rescue, is Richmond's [redacted] from [redacted].

Intel reports also show that Daimon Hellstrom (codename: Son of Satan) is [redacted]. His recent activity suggests [redacted] on a quest for [redacted]. Similar reports out of Wundagore [redacted] that former Atlantean military leader Krang underwent genetic engineering to [redacted].

Ultimately, I suggest immediate termination of this organization and schedule re-tooling. We've got a chance to fix this – we don't want to end up with the LAST Defenders.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Cover by Mike Deodato and Rain Beredo

Call Pym and Richards

Production by Anthony Diaz

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I'M GOING FOR THE *KNOCKDOWN,* FELLAS--!

OH MY *GOD--!*

THIS THING'S GOING NUTS! IT'LL TEAR UP THE CITY!

SOMEBODY--

COOL YER JETS, FEARLESS LEADER!

I'M COMIN' BACK FOR *ROUND TWO!*

IT WILL BE ***DECADES*** BEFORE YOU UNDERSTAND THE ***SIGNIFICANCE*** OF THIS FACE-TO-FACE MEETING...

...OF ***MY*** SIGNIFICANCE IN YOUR LIFE...

...AND, FINALLY, YOUR OWN ***IMPORTANCE***. BUT PERHAPS --

THAT'S ENOUGH!

AT THIS POINT, I DON'T CARE ***WHO*** YOU ARE! YOU WANT TO PLAY GAMES WITH ***ME***...YOU'RE FLIRTING WITH THE ***APOCALYPSE!***

SPARE ME THE MELODRAMATICS. YOU HAVE ***YOUR*** POWER, HELLSTROM--

--YANDROTH HAS HIS ***OWN.***

I'M NOT IMPRESSED BY PARLOR TRICKS.

OF COURSE NOT. NEVERTHELESS, YOUR MASTERY OF THE OCCULT PUTS YOU ON A GREATER PATH TO ***DEFEND*** THIS WORLD...

...SUCH AS IT IS.

BUT AS THERE WILL SOON BE A COMMUNITY OF ***HEROES*** WHO WALK THIS PLANET, ***SOMEONE*** HAS TO PUT IT IN YOUR HEAD...YOU WILL EVENTUALLY COUNT YOURSELF AS ***ONE*** OF THEM.

I FIND MUCH IRONY IN THAT SOMEONE BEING ***ME.***

FORTUNE-TELLERS DO NOT AMUSE ME, EITHER.

WHATEVER PATH I CHOOSE... I CAN ASSURE YOU IT WILL BE MY OWN.

THE ARROGANCE OF YOUTH...

...BUT YOU'VE STILL GOT A LITTLE TIME.

THEN...